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THE FIRST MEMORY.

It is my earliest memory:
  Behind, by viewless sunlight kissed,
  Lies, glimmering, the golden mist
That hides, for ever hides, from me,
The fairy land of infancy!

The gateway of our narrow yard
My baby feet from roving barred.
One day I found it swinging wide;
  My freedom was, at last, my own;
I pressed triumphantly outside,
  And stepped forth in a world unknown!
Across the way, a field of corn
Was rustling in the breezy morn.
I hastened to it: overhead
The long green leaves their banners spread;
(No eastern palm, to-day, to me,
So proudly tall would seem to be!)
Above against the clear, blue sky,
The crests of flowers rose straight and high,
While, in the sheltering shade beneath,
The silk hung from each emerald sheath.
At once my dimpled hands were full—
What joy the glistening threads to pull,
And bear the treasure home to show!
When, lo,
I could not find the way to go!
  I wandered helpless here and there;
The long, green leaves with rustling sound,
Were bending, swaying, all around;
They whispered terror in my ears;—
  "Where had I come! O where? O where?"
My all, my baby all, seemed lost,
Since I the door-yard gate had crossed.
With trembling limbs and blind with tears,
And lifting piercing shriek on shriek,
That still to me seemed faint and weak,
Of all earth's creatures most forlorn,
I stood amid that waving corn—
When on my brow I felt a kiss,
Warm, loving arms were round me prest,
And in an ecstacy of bliss
I lay upon my mother's breast!

It is my earliest memory:
Ay, more! how oft it comes to me
When all looks dark, around, above,
And seems a parable of love!

—Marion Douglas, in Wide Awake.

STORIES OF SHIPS.

The Mysterious Fate of Vessels Never Heard From.

I suppose that a hundred ships come and go where one is lost, but when one reflects on the dangers to which they are exposed he must marvel that so many escape. I saw a list of thirty-six missing ships the other day, missing from American, English and French ports, and the fate of each was unknown or guessed at. Say that half of them foundered in mid-ocean, five were run down in collision, five more were wrecked on capes or shoals where all hands perished, and what became of the rest? Say that three of the remainder were destroyed by fire, and what fate shall we attach to the other five? From the moment a vessel leaves port to begin her voyage she is exposed to danger, and though a sailor may be ever so brave and hardy, he can not shake off the knowledge that he lives on the verge of the grave. There are gales, and fogs, and collisions, and fire, and hidden rocks, and powerful currents; and so I repeat that it is a marvel more sailing craft are not added to the lonesome list of missing which is recorded year by year.

In the year 1855, as the British bark Lord Oldham, of which I was second mate, was approaching the Canary Islands, and when about 180 miles distant, we were caught in the tail end of a cyclone and badly knocked about. We got out with some slight loss and a great deal of discomfort, and were bearing up again to our course when a great calamity happened. Half an hour before midnight, while the bark was doing her best under a fresh breeze, a sudden and great shock was felt. Her masts went by the board, and, as I reached the deck, a minute after the shock, the hull seemed to split open from stem to stern. I had gone below to get a glass of bitters, leaving the deck only thirty seconds before the shock came. I was knocked down and confused, but it could not have been over sixty seconds before I regained the deck. It was just in time to be carried overboard. I went with a lot of raffle from the decks, and amid the frightened cries of the men, and a quarter of an hour later, when I had lashed myself in the cross-trees of the mainmast, I could not get an answer to any of my calls to the rest of the crew. How it was that all were lost I never could make out. There was raffle enough to have floated 500 men, and my watch were certainly all wide awake at the moment of the collision. The only explanation I can give is that they were somehow caught and crushed. I drifted during the rest of the night, and was picked up in the morning by a vessel bound in. By that time the wreckage had drifted apart until nothing could be found. Nothing whatever was picked up or cast upon any shore, and had I not been saved, the fate of the bark could only have been guessed at.

What did she collide with? The lookouts were on the bow, and alert, and the night so clear that a ship could have been seen a mile away. The chart showed clear water for a hundred miles about, and we must have run full tilt upon some vessel which had been dismasted and bilged in a hurricane. If loaded with timber, her decks would have been awash, and she would have been as bad as a rock to collide with. There was only one shock, and the whole bows of the bark were crushed in by it.

Three years later, while off the Banks of Brazil in a small English ship called the White Cloud, another strange thing happened. I was first mate of this ship, and about ten o'clock in the forenoon, the weather being very fine and the wind light, I had all the men on deck setting up the rigging, some of which had slackened away. A man aloft suddenly hailed the deck with the information that a large whale was bearing down on the ship, head on. We were a merchant vessel, and the sight of a whale had no interest for us. We went on with our work for three or four minutes, when the man again hailed me with:

"If that fellow holds his course he will be dead on to us, sir. He's a big fellow, and coming like an iron steamer."

I ran forward to get a look, and the sea was so smooth that I had no difficulty in making out the whale. He was still a mile away, coming down at about steamer speed, and holding a course as straight as if somebody aboard of him was steering by compass. I was not a bit alarmed, expecting to see him show flukes every moment, but the captain came on deck and ordered the man at the wheel to break off two or three points. This brought the whale on our port bow. As I told you, I expected to see him sound every moment. It was astonishing that he had not discovered us long before. I could scarcely believe my eyes as he held on, and by and by we had him alongside. I am telling you the truth when I say he actually rubbed us as we passed each other, and the odor of him was so rank that some of the men cried out in disgust. That whale was ninety feet long if he was an inch, and he had a head on him like a brick wall. So far as we could see he was carrying no harpoons and had no fresh wound, but he was moss-grown and barnacled as if he had knocked about for a couple of hundred years. The fact of his holding his own in such a bull-headed way was alarming, and when we were clear of him we fell to congratulating ourselves over the close shave.

We were perhaps a mile apart when the whale slewed around. The moment we discovered what he was doing we knew that he meant to attack. The breeze had now died away until we could not hope to dodge him, and he had not yet fairly turned when we dropped the yawl from the davits and ran her alongside to the bow. Two men were ordered to get water and provisions into her, and as the whale headed up for us we went off before the breeze to give him all the room we could. Three or four minutes settled the question of whether he was after the ship or sailing his own course. He headed up for her, coming faster and faster, and when he was two cable's length away there was a great white wall of water rolling before him, and his speed was from eighteen to twenty miles an hour. He struck us full on the starboard quarter, and the shock was as if two ships had collided. Planks and ribs gave way before him, and as he recoiled from the blow our ship settled down stern first and was under water within two minutes. Everybody was knocked down by the shock, and everybody got up to rush for the yawl. I was sucked down almost as soon as I reached my feet, and after a struggle, in which I came out first best by a close shave, I was shot to the surface amid a lot of deck raffle. There were two or three men around me at first and as I was heaved up I caught sight of the yawl with at least two men in her. The whale was still at hand, lying very quiet, but I feared he would soon be aroused and attack us in turn, and I seized the galley door and paddled away to get out of his reach. While doing this a squall came down and hung on for twenty minutes, and when it had passed I could see nothing of boat nor whale.

That afternoon, an hour before sundown, I was picked up by the American whaler Richard Knox. She already had our yawl, which she had found bottom up, but had not seen any of the men nor met with any wreckage. I was again the only one saved, and but for my testimony the fate of the ship would have forever remained a mystery. As to why the whale attacked us was made more clear after my rescue. The Knox had raised and chased him the evening before, and he had been "gallied" or annoyed so often during the month past that he had become ugly. He came for us with the intention of sending the ship to the bottom, and he succeeded only too well in carrying out his purpose.

A third mystery was the case of the Janet Wilcox, an American brig bound for Rio Janeiro. I was second mate of her when the occurrence took place. We had bad weather for a good share of the voyage, but the brig was new and stanch, and was at no time in imminent peril. About three hundred miles off Rio, while enjoying a bit of good weather, we one morning raised a longboat full of men dead ahead of us. Indeed, the boat had taken down her sail and was waiting for us to come up. There were nine men aboard of her, and they had plenty of water and provisions. The story they told was that they were a part of the crew of a large British ship which had been burned two days before. They claimed that all had got off in boats, but that the boats had become separated in the heavy weather. They were a hard-looking lot, composed of all nationalities, and when we had taken them aboard our captain was by no means satisfied with their story. One of them claimed to be second mate, and, as the crew had all got off in two boats, it was a puzzle that the first mate was not in command of one. Other strange things came up, and the story of the men did not hang together, and so all hands were ordered to keep an eye on the fellows.

We got a good slant of wind and had run down to within fifty or sixty miles of the coast when the fellows showed their hands. They had been allowed to mingle freely with our crew, but had carefully abstained from a remark to indicate that they had an evil purpose in view. Their boat was large and unwieldy, and we had towed it after us rather than to cast it loose or to attempt to hoist it inboard. I was on watch from eight to twelve, and nothing suspicious occurred during the first three hours. About eleven o'clock, as I stood near the man at the wheel, I was hailed from the foremast with:

"Mr. Merlin, will you please step forward and take a look at something we can't make out?"

I afterward recalled that it was not the voice of one of my watch, but I did not heed the matter at the time. I started forward and had reached the waist of the vessel when two men seized me, lifted me clear of the deck, and before I could recover from my astonishment I was flung overboard head first. It was more by instinct than any plan of my own that I swam for the boat towing astern. Had the brig not been sailing close hauled, and therefore sailing at a moderate pace, I should not have reached it. It was a close shave and as I hung to the gunwale for a moment I heard a great confusion on the brig. It was mutiny, of course, and I was the first victim. My idea was to get aboard again as soon as possible, and the only way was to get into the yawl, pull her close up, and then shin up the painter. After an effort or two I pulled myself in, and just then there were oaths and cries and pistol shots from the brig, followed by a couple of splashes alongside, which meant that two bodies, living or dead, had gone overboard. I had hold of the painter when it was loosened from above and I drifted rapidly astern. The fight continued as long as I was within hearing. I was out of it entirely, and could only hope that our crew, who were all good men, would overcome the mutineers in the struggle.

After the brig was out of sight I got sail on the boat, and followed her to the best of my judgment. It was just in the gray of morning that I was picked up by a British ship bound into Rio. It wasn't so very mysterious that we picked up the boat and her crew attempted our capture, but it certainly was queer that from the hour she left me to this day that brig has never been heard of. But for my escape she would have been rated as lost and the insurance paid. As it was the insurance company contested payment, and won their case in court. The insurance of that day, at least, did not provide for any such emergency. The naval and merchant service of every power was notified of the circumstance and for two or three years every sea was under observation, but the brig was never overhauled, nor any of her old crew heord of. My idea is that she foundered within a few days with all hands, but others differ. She certainly did not turn pirate, and she was never heard of as a wreck. There was no such British ship as the men said, nor was any craft burned as they stated. They must have been lying in wait; but it is queer that they would be so far out to sea in such a boat. Taken all in all it was a strange case, and no one has ever got the right end of the thread to solve the tangle.—N. Y. Sun.

—A discussion arose on board an Atlantic liner a short time ago as to the citizenship of a gentleman at the other end of the saloon. "He's an Englishman," said one. "I know by his head." "He's a Scotchman," said another. "I know by his complexion." "He's a German," said another. "I know by his beard." The young ladies thought he looked a little Spanish. Here the conversation rested, but soon one of them spoke. "I have it," said she. "He's an American; he's got his legs on the table."—Boston Beacon.

SWEEPING A ROOM.

A Domestic Art That Should Be Acquired By All Housekeepers.

Rooms that are carpeted should be frequently swept, even though they may not be used much. Especial care should be taken to brush the edges and corners of the carpet with a short corn broom. Moths and carpet-bugs are in this way kept out of a room. A sleeping-room should be thoroughly swept and dusted every week, no matter how clean it may look. With no room in the house should there be more care taken. It may look all right, but it will not be fresh and sweet without the weekly cleaning. Have covers for the large pieces of furniture. These covers should be about two yards and a half long. In most households three such covers will be enough. Three breadths of some cheap print, stitched together and hemmed, will make a cover that answers for the largest piece of furniture.

First dust the ornaments and small pieces of furniture and put them in another room. Now dust the heavy pieces and cover them with the cloths. Brush the backs of the pictures and the ledges over the doors and windows. Shake out the curtains, if you have drapery, and fold and fasten them back from the window. If there be portieres, take them down, if you can easily do so, and shake and air them. Take up the rugs and have them beaten out-of-doors. When all this is done, sprinkle the carpet with coarse dairy salt and then sweep the room, taking short strokes with the broom. Take up the sweepings and shake the broom out-of-doors, to remove all the dust and lint.

After the dust has had time to settle, go over the carpet with a broom once more, sweeping very gently. This will take up all the dust that has settled on the carpet. With a feather duster, dust the walls, doors, pictures, windows, etc. Take the covers from the heavy furniture, and after shaking them out-of-doors, fold them up and put them away. Wash the windows and wash all the spots from the paint around the door-knobs, baseboards, etc. If there be a fire-place in the room, wash the hearth; or, if a stove be used, polish it before dusting. Now shake out the curtains and hang the portieres. Place the furniture and ornaments in position, using a piece of cheese cloth to wipe off any dust that may cling to any of the articles.

No matter how cold the weather, the windows should be kept open during the sweeping and dusting.

A print dress and a cap should always be worn when sweeping. Cut a pair of old stockings open at the toes, and cut a hole in each heel for the thumbs. Draw these over the hands and arms and they will protect the hands and sleeves.

When a carpet is used a good deal, as in a sitting-room, after it is swept, put two quarts of warm water in a pail and add to it three tablespoonfuls of ammonia, or two of turpentine. Wring a cloth out of this water and wipe the carpet with it. It will brighten the fabric considerably.

When cleaning a room, never shake rugs, curtains, etc., out of the windows. A large part of the dust flies back into the room; much of it clings to the house; and if there be any windows open near by, the dust is blown through them into other rooms. In either summer or winter, all these things should, when possible, have a good shaking in the back yard and then be hung on a line for awhile, to get an airing.—Maria Parloa, in Housewife.

Soaking Grain in Brine.

The usual method of soaking grain in brine to destroy smut spores is as follows: In an ordinary wash tub prepare the brine so that it will float a fresh egg. The seed is then placed in the fluid and allowed to soak for ten or fifteen minutes, after which the liquid is poured into another tub and the grain is spread on the floor, sprinkled with sufficient lime to whiten it, and allowed to dry. This process is repeated until all the grain has been soaked. While there has long been a wide-spread belief among farmers that soaking seed in brine, sulphate of copper solutions and other preparations would prevent smut, recent carefully conducted experiments have demonstrated that little or no benefit is to be derived from any such treatment. In fact, it has been shown that dressing the seed with strong brine or sulphate of copper solution, especially the latter, in nine cases out of ten does more harm than good. It weakens the vitality of the seed to such an extent that if they germinate at all the plants they make are weak and rarely mature perfect fruit.—B. T. Galloway, Vegetable Pathologist, Department of Agriculture.

—By using the best seed the more vigorous and healthy plants are secured; and then by giving good cultivation a good growth is made, and in this way large crops are secured.

PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL.

—Miss Fannie Macaulay, who died a few days ago at Brighton, England, at the age of eighty, was the last surviving sister of Thomas Babington Macaulay.

—One of Murat's daughters, Luisa Marchesa Rasponi, is said to be still living, at the age of ninety-two, in Ravenna, Italy. She was, therefore, nineteen in 1815, when Napoleon I. was dethroned and her father shot.

—Assistant Doorkeeper Bassett has been in the employ of the United States Senate for fifty-eight years. He recently celebrated his golden wedding, and was then made the recipient of a handsome present from the Senators.

—E. B. Ball, the nearest living relative of George Washington, occupies a stall in the south corridor of the Pension Building at Washington, where he sells cigars and fruit to the clerks. He is nearly eighty years old, and bears a striking resemblance to the Father of his Country.

—John Wanamaker's country place at Jenkin town is said to absorb his attention as completely when out of town as business does at the store in Philadelphia. He is a liberal entertainer, and his hail-fellow freedom and jollity are contagious. He has a splendid collection of roses and orchids, and his rhododendrons are famous in the neighborhood.

—Mrs. Stanley Brown, formerly Miss Mollie Garfield, daughter of the dead President, is described as a singularly beautiful woman, with a slender but almost faultless form. The impressive effect of her beauty is said to be heightened by "undisguisable suggestions of sadness," which have lingered about her eyes and mouth ever since the dark days of '81, when she lost the father she idolized.

—The Duke of Westminster, according to the latest returns, is still the richest man in Great Britain, his fortune being set down at $80,000,000. This is a pretty big pile, but it isn't overstating it to say that there are at least half a dozen men in this country who could buy out the Duke without exhausting the contents of their coffers. America has become the abode of the Crœsuses of the earth.

—Miss Breckinridge, daughter of the Kentucky Congressman, said to a Washington writer, recently: "We once lived at the same hotel with General and Mrs. Harrison. She is one of the sweetest women in the world, and will be very popular. She takes sincere pleasure in doing good and making everybody happy. We young girls were all in love with her. She used to give us a great deal of pleasure, and I do not suppose that she was ever conscious of it."

"A LITTLE NONSENSE."

—A Chicago woman recently married a man named Nail. There is one woman, then, who can hit a Nail on the head every time.—Yonkers Statesman.

—In Ecuador it is understood that the employer shall board the cook's family. The case is similar in America, only the employer doesn't understand it.—Drake's Magazine.

—The last words of great men are all recorded in the books, but the last words of women, great and small, have always been too much for the historians.—Journal of Education.

—Rescuer (to man he has just cut down)—"The boys lynched yer, and left yer fur dead, did they? Well, how do yer feel now?" Half-hanged man—"Quite unstrung."—Boston Beacon.

—Dullard—"Now this is outrageous. Here's Casket has charged the widow Jones $500 for her husband's funeral." Brightly—"Well, you must always expect a stiff bill from an undertaker."—Lowell Citizen.

—The coal man he whistled a melody gay,
As he fixed up the scales in a fanciful way,
And he nodded and smiled while he caroled this lay:
"As we journey through life, let us live by the weigh."

—Merchant Traveler.

—Mrs. Temperton—"Henry, father wrote me yesterday that he wants to get a typewriter. What is the best kind, do you think?" Temperton (immersed in stock questions)—"I like 'em about twenty-four with dark blue eyes."—Munsey's Weekly.

—Stranger—"How are base-ball prospects in Terre Haute?" Terre Haute citizen—"Bad. All gone to the dogs, so to speak." Stranger—"Ah, that accounts for the sight of so many canines with catchers' masks on, I suppose."—Terre Haute Express.

—A gentleman meeting a friend on the street stopped him to condole with him on his emaciated appearance, and inquired anxiously as to the cause. "Alas!" said the friend, "I have suffered for years with walking in my sleep. I have walked out of the door at night, have been saved when about to step from an upper window, and am now so in dread of fatal results that I fear to sleep at all." "An easy matter to cure," replied the first gentleman. "Take car fare to bed with you and you won't walk."—Philadelphia Press.